

West Boylston Solid Waste  
Advisory Team (SWAT)

Survey Results and Q&A

March 2023

# Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Information

*Did you know...*

- SWAT is charged with advising the Town Administrator, the Select Board, and Town Meetings on solid waste issues, including reducing solid waste costs and improving the town's recycling rate.
- SWAT information, including annual reports are under the DPW section of the town website:  
<https://www.westboyiston-ma.gov/solid-waste-and-recycling/solid-waste-advisory-team-swat>
- SWAT and DPW jointly plan the annual Earth Day clean up. This year it is on 4/22/23. You can sign up here to help:  
<https://forms.gle/aCdy67SuS6KTT1gWA>

# Survey Background

- The West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) sent out a survey in January 2023 to learn how citizens currently manage waste materials/recyclables and what resources and guidance would be helpful.
- This survey was spurred by new MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan requirements that includes strict parameters for waste disposal, including banning mattresses and textiles in waste disposal. A recent report from Zero Waste Massachusetts also informed the survey questions.

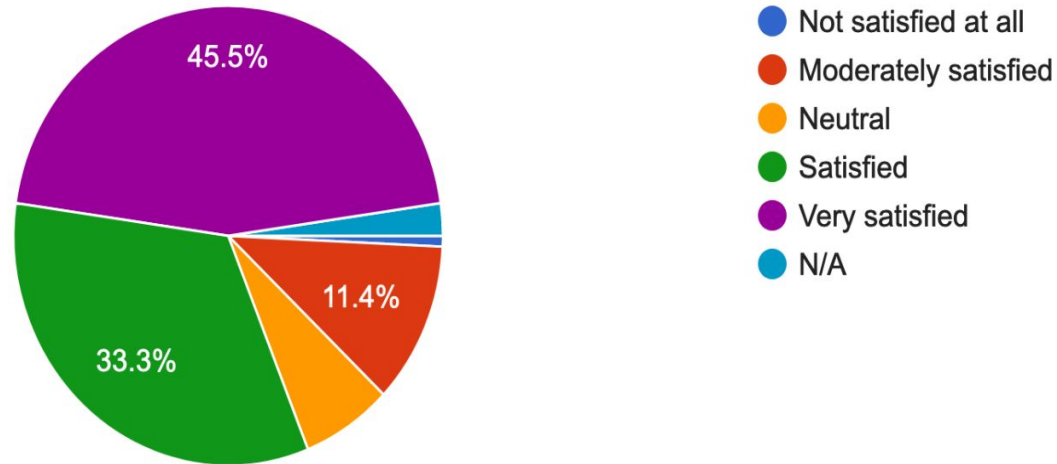
# Response Rate, Demographics & Usage

- 132 people answered the survey which was available online and in print form
- 86% of respondents live in single family homes, 11% in condos and 3% in apartments
- 98% of respondents use town of West Boylston trash and recycling services
- 90% of respondents were very satisfied, satisfied or moderately satisfied with trash & recycling services (see next slide)

# Satisfaction with West Boylston Trash and Recycling Service

What is your level of satisfaction with the current West Boylston trash and recycling service (provided by Republic Services using the green bags and recycle bins)?

132 responses



# Sources for Trash and Recycling Information

- Most respondents get their information through the collection calendar mailed to all West Boylston residents
- Many respondents visit the West Boylston Dept of Public Works (DPW) website:  
<https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/solid-waste-and-recycling>
- Some respondents get text alerts from DPW about trash and recycling
- Social media is used by some respondents to get information

*Did you know...*

You can sign up for text alerts about trash and recycling here:

<https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/subscribe>

*\* You can also sign up for other town alerts at this link*

# Concerns about Trash Collection

- 51% of respondents had no concerns about trash collection
- 37% had concerns about the green bags
- 7% want more information about what can be recycled and kept out of trash
- 5% answered NA

Individual comments included the quality, size and availability of trash bags. A few comments centered on timing of trash pick up and holiday schedules.

## *Did you know...*

- West Boylston has the lowest price for trash bags compared to surrounding towns
- The collection calendar mailed to residents has information about holiday schedules
- If you have an issue with missed trash pick up or collection before 7:00 a.m. please contact the West Boylston DPW

# Concerns about Recycling Collection

- 51% of respondents had no concerns about their recycling container
- 18% would like their recycle container to have a lid
- 15% indicated their recycle container was too small
- 16% indicated they did not know how to get a recycle container

There were individual comments about the use of larger purchased bins, the desired use of rolling bins and concerns about recycling being put in with trash.

## *Did you know...*

- Recyclables can be placed curbside in any container (less than 50 lbs. per container)
- Refer to the West Boylston collection calendar for more information on recycling, it can be found at this link:

[https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyh1if1421/f/uploads/west\\_boylston\\_calendar\\_2022-2023.pdf](https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyh1if1421/f/uploads/west_boylston_calendar_2022-2023.pdf)



# Reducing Trash by Increasing Recycling and Composting

- 41% respondents indicated they already compost and recycle to minimize trash in landfills
- 28% need more information on how and where to recycle some items or compost
- 24% were not sure they could reduce the amount of trash they put in the green bags
- 7% indicated not applicable



# Use of Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center (WWRRC)

- 44% of respondents use WWRRC frequently
- 38% use WWRRC for special events such as shredding and hazardous waste disposal
- 18% want to learn more about WWRRC
- 5% have purchased a compost bin at WWRRC

Comments included gratitude for this center and its volunteers, limited open hours, and sometimes long lines.

## *Did you know...*

- The WWRRC website lists the open hours and contains lots of useful information:  
<https://wachusettearthday.org/>
- As an almost completely all-volunteer operation, WWRRC relies on volunteers to keep the site open

## More Information on WWRRC

### *Did you know...*

- WWRRC is open only to the residents of Boylston, Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston  
Everyone must go through check in and provide an ID.  
Participation for each town is tracked.
- WWRRC accepts many things, some free, some for a fee:  
<https://wachusetearthday.org/items-we-accept/>  
<https://wachusetearthday.org/drop-off-fees/>
- WWRRC has a Facebook page that is kept up-to-date:  
<https://www.facebook.com/wachusett.earthday.inc/>

## Use of West Boylston DPW Drop Off Services

- 32% of respondents have used yard waste drop off
- 19% have dropped off used motor oil
- 12% dispose of xmas trees there
- 39% of respondents have not used any of the DPW services
- 27% compost their yard waste or keep yards natural for birds & wildlife
- 10% have lawn service

*Did you know...*

West Boylston DPW has responsibility for solid waste and recycling as well as other areas. Check out their website for helpful information:

<https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/solid-waste-and-recycling>

# Composting is a Key Strategy to Reduce Food Waste in Landfills

- 31% of respondents said they compost food scraps
- 29% would like to compost but not sure how to do it
- 28% are not interested in composting
- 4% indicated where they reside limits or prohibits composting
- Some respondents use a composting service

## *Did you know...*

- WWRRC sells compost bins at a subsidized rate:  
<https://wachusetearthday.org/large-composters-for-sale/>
- Bootstrap composting offers curbside composting service to West Boylston  
<https://bootstrapcompost.com/>
- MassDEP has resources on home composting and green landscaping:  
<https://www.mass.gov/lists/home-composting-green-landscaping>

# Ways to Conserve Precious Resources for Future Generations

Survey respondents indicated all the ways they conserve resources

- 88% recycle clothes and textiles
- 83% use reusable shopping bags
- 79% donate furniture & household goods
- 51% recycle plastic bags at grocery store
- 25% avoid single use containers, straws, plastic silverware, etc.
- 24% use Freecycle or other buy nothing groups
- 21% might be willing to pay an extra fee for curbside compost or textile pick-up



# Recycling Resources and Information

Survey respondents indicated all the sources they consult for information

- 65% of respondents go to the WWRRC website for recycling information
- 43% use the town website
- 27% go to the town DPW website
- 18% have not looked for information
- 8% have used Recyclopedia, Recycle Search, Beyond the Bin, Recyclesmartma, or Earth911

Comments included attending a recycle program at Beaman library, internet searches, and tips from friends and neighbors.

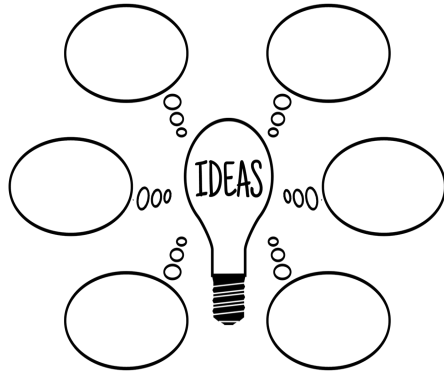
*Did you know...*

The Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center has a very helpful page with many resources in one place (some which help our local communities):

<https://wachusettearthday.org/where-else-can-i-recycle/>

# Ideas to Reduce Waste and Increase Recycling/Composting

Survey respondents indicated all the ideas that appealed to them to make systemic changes



- 48% would like social media resources
- 42% would text or email reminders
- 38% would like how-to videos on trash, recycling and composting on the town or DPW website
- 19% would like a recycle phone app such as Recycle Coach, iRecycle or other
- 11% would like to start a West Boylston chapter with Keep Massachusetts Beautiful
- A handful of respondents indicated none on the survey or were not interested



# Other Comments to Decrease Trash & Increase Recycling

- 6 Respondents said thank you for the survey, 1 commented on the friendly and hardworking Republic Services staff and 1 requested published results
- Enforce recycling requirements (some other towns do this)
- Consider using compostable trash bags
- Ban alcohol bottles under 32 ounces.
- Connect with other neighborhood groups such as "NextDoor"
- Consider having a West Boylston FreeCycle choice (**There are nearby Worcester and Wachusett options**)
- Start a community garden at Senior Center
- Open the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center more frequently and charge an annual fee in lieu of single payments

## Other Comments from Survey Respondents **with Answers**

- Many respondents asked if we could bring back the “pink bag” program  
SWAT is working on curbside textile pick up. In the meantime, you can find many textile bins around town.
- Several respondents wondered what to do with old mattresses  
If your mattress is in good shape, consider putting it on CraigsList or Free Cycle or contacting Central Mass Housing Alliance:  
<https://www.cmhaonline.org/donating-dch> Mattresses can be disposed of at WWRRC for a fee: <https://wachusetearthday.org/drop-off-fees/>
- Several respondents asked about using bins instead of trash bags or having compostable trash bags  
West Boylston has a contract for trash/recycling collection that is renewed periodically. SWAT frequently discusses ideas to improve solid waste collection while meeting mandates and keeping costs reasonable. For more information see the SWAT website, including the annual reports:  
<https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/solid-waste-and-recycling/solid-waste-advisory-team-swat>

# Thank You for Caring!

- Each one of us can make a difference for future generations to leave them a healthy environment in which to live.
- We hope that this information is helpful and encourage you to contact SWAT with any additional ideas or comments: <https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/solid-waste-and-recycling/solid-waste-advisory-team-swat/webforms/contact-swat>

